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B. The North and Political Reaction

177 648 Although the West, particularly England, had been pressing the Ch'ing Dynasty from the late eighteenth century for the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations on a basis of equality and fought a war with China in 1840-42 in an attempt to institute such relations, Western military force did not penetrate the North China Region until 1858. Anglo-French armies, accompanied by American and Russian diplomatic representatives, occupied Tientsin in that year as part of a renewed effort to obtain the old objectives. When Peking continued to procrastinate, the French and English forces thrust into Peking in 1860. The Manchu court having fled north to southwestern Manchuria, the armies of both nations sacked the Summer Palace in retaliation for mistreatment of some captured Western soldiers. The Ch'ing Dynasty was not only forced to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with the West, but had to do so with China as an inferior partner.

643 178 The real power of the Manchu throne from 1856 to 1908 was concentrated in the hands of the Empress Dowager Tz'u Hsi (or the "Old Buddha," as she was commonly called). A strong-willed and capable woman, she was largely ignorant and unmindful of China's

643 weakness, strongly anti-foreign, resistant to
178 reform, and more intent on seeking satisfaction for her own desires and whims than in promoting the nation's welfare. One example of her tendencies was the diverting of millions of dollars appropriated for the modernization of China's navy into the rebuilding of the Summer Palace at Peking, including, ironically, a marble ship. Surrounded by corruption and grasping, idle courtiers as ignorant and reactionary as herself, Tz'u Hsi was responsible in great part for the failure of such reform and modernization as was attempted while she held power.

178 One of the most reform-minded and influential of the scholar-officials from Hopei who served the Ch'ing Dynasty was Chang Chih-tung (1837-1909). The essence of his ideas was expressed in the slogan he made famous in 1898, summing up the approach to change of the generation that preceded and followed him -- Chung-hsüeh wei t'i, Hsi-hsüeh wei yung ("Chinese study for the fundamental principles, Western learning for practical application"). In word and deed, he promoted industrialization as a means of saving China. On the other hand, in his widely read book, Ch'üan-shueh-p'ien [Exhortation to Study], he stoutly supported the Manchu Dynasty as the defender of the Chinese race, insisted on